

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 CAIRO 17443 171545Z
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-08 EUR-12 ISO-00 SSM-03 CIAE-00 DODE-00
PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01
SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 SAJ-01 DHA-02 IO-13 MCT-01 /096 W
----- 045350 /70

R 171410Z DEC 76
FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9831
INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
AMEMBASSY ALGIERS
AMEMBASSY AMMAN
USINT BAGHDAD
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY DOHA
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MANAMA
/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW 2806
AMEMBASSY MUSCAT
AMEMBASSY RABAT
AMEMBASSY SANA
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
AMEMBASSY TRIPOKI
AMEMBASSY TUNIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L CAIRO 17443

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, EG, SY
SUBJ: EGYPTIAN/SYRIAN RELATIONS ON EVE OF ASAD VISIT

SUMMARY: ASAD VISIT, WHICH EXPECTED TO TAKE PLACE DEC 18-23,
BEING BILLED AS MAJOR EFFORT TO COORDINATE EGYPTIAN/SYRIAN
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 CAIRO 17443 171545Z

POSITION ON GENEVA CONF, TO CONSOLIDATE ARAB SOLIDARITY AND
TO CEMENT BILATERAL RELATIONS, INCLUDING JOINT PLANS AND
INTERGRATED MILITARY COMMAND. RIYADH AND CAIRO SUMMITS HAVE
SET STAGE FOR WHAT MAY BE PRODUCTIVE DISCUSSIONS. SADAT
LIKELY TO PRESS FOR NECESSITY OF MAINTAINING MOMENTUM OF
HIS "PEACE OFFENSIVE" AND FOR AGREEMENT ON TACTICS TOWARD

PALESTINIANS. SOME MUTUAL SUSPICION UNDOUBTEDLY PERSISTS, ESPECIALLY OVER PLO, AND BOTH SIDES AS WELL AS PALESTINIAN FACTIONS ARE ALL ACTIVELY SEEKING TO STRENGTHEN THEIR POSITION VIS-A-VIS ALL OTHER PARTIES. IF SADAT AND ASAD CAN AGREE ON HOW TO MANIPULATE PALESTINIANS FOR THEIR MUTUAL BENEFIT, OUTCOME OF VISIT WILL BE SATISFACTORY FROM GOE POINT OF VIEW. IF NOT, SYRIAN-EGYPTIAN REAPPROACHMENT MAY SUFFER NEW STRAIN. END SUMMARY

1. UPCOMING VISIT OF SYRIAN PRES ASAD TO CAIRO DEC 18 IS AROUSING CONSIDERABLE LOCAL INTEREST. SYMBOLICALLY, IT PUBLICLY CONFIRMS RAPPROCHMENT BETWEEN EGYPT AND SYRIAN RESULTING FROM RIYADH AND CAIRO SUMMITS. EGYPTIANS, WHO NEVER TIRE OF NATIONAL EGO MASSAGE, EMPHASIZE IT WAS ASAD WHO REQUESTED SUCH VISIT DURING RECENT MUBARAK/FAHMY TRANSIT OF DAMASCUS. ASKED WHY ASAD WANTS VISIT AT THIS TIME, FAHMY TOLD AMB THAT SYRIAN PRES NEEDS IT TO STRENGTHEN HIMSELF AT HOME. VISIT, WHICH WAS INITIALLY TO HAVE BEGUN A WEEK AGO, WAS POSTPONED OSTENSIBLY BECAUSE OF SADAT'S BOUT OF INFLUENZA (CAIRO 17030). SEVERAL WEST AND EAST EUROPEAN AMBASSADORS CLAIM REAL REASON FOR POSTPONEMENT WAS DESIRE ON PART OF BOTH PRESIDENTS TO AWAIT OUTCOME OF PALESTINIAN NATIONAL COUNCIL SESSION IN DAMASCUS.

2. MEDIA GIVING BIG BUILDUP TO VISIT. IMPRESSIVE NUMBER OF SYRIAN LEADERS INCLUDING FORMIN KHADDAM WILL ACCOMPANY ASAD (FBIS R 161411DEC CARRIES COMPOSITION OF DEL) TOGETHER WITH LARGE PRESS DEL. DATE FOR COMPLETION OF VISIT DELIBERATELY HAS BEEN LEFT "OPEN ENDED TO GIVE PRINCIPALS FULL FREEDOM TO DISCUSS ALL SUBJECTS". MFA PROTOCOL CHIEF TELLS US FIVE CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 CAIRO 17443 171545Z

DAYS, I.E., DEC 18-23, TENTATIVELY SET ASIDE FOR TALKS. IF ASAD WISHES STAY LONGER, HE CAN BE ACCOMMODATED.

3. ACCORDING TO FAHMY, NO FORMAL AGENDA HAS BEEN SET IN ORDER TO ALLOW TALKS TO RANGE AS WIDELY AS EITHER PRES WISHES. EGYPTIAN AMB-DESIGNATE TO SYRIA GAMAL MANSOUR, WHO HAS NOT BEEN INVOLVED IN PLANNING, TELLS US HE BELIEVES PRIME FOCUS OF TALKS WILL BE ON ALIGNING THE TWO COUNTRY'S POSITIONS WITH RESPECT TO THE GENEVA CONF. TODAY'S CAIRO PRESS, PROBABLY WITH SOME OFFICIAL GUIDANCE, SPECULATES SADAT/ASAD TALKS WILL COVER THREE MAIN AREAS: (A) EFFORTS TO BRING ABOUT GENEVA CONF; (B) CONSOLIDATION OF ARAB SOLIDARITY; AND (C) CEMENTING BILATERAL RELATIONS, INCLUDING JOINT PLANS FOR "LIBERATING TERRITORIES" AND INTEGRATED MILITARY COMMAND. (GAMASY RECENTLY TOLD AMB THAT HE HAD NOT YET RECEIVED WRITTEN WORD FROM ASAD ON HIS DESIGNATION AS JOINT MILITARY COMMANDER -- CAIRO 16198). PRESS ALSO BELIEVES SOVIET-ARAB RELATIONS WILL BE COVERED, WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO FAHMY/GROMYKO MEETING IN SOFIA

AND SYRIAN EXPERIENCE WITH SOVIETS.

4. ALL THESE SEEM LIKELY SUBJECTS, BUT WE SUSPECT THAT THE TWO PRESIDENTIAL CONFEREES WILL ALSO SPEND CONSIDERABLE TIME ASSESSING EXPECTED ATTITUDE OF NEW US ADMINISTRATION TOWARD THE PEACE PROCESS AND WHAT CAN BE DONE TO INSURE A CONTINUATION OF US EVEN-HANDEDNESS. SADAT WILL CERTAINLY UNDERSCORE "PEACE OFFENSIVE" WHICH HE LAUNCHED, BEGINNING WITH THE VISIT OF RECENT CODELS, AND THE OVERWHELMING UNGA APPROVAL OF THE EGYPTIAN RESOLUTION. THIS "PEACE OFFENSIVE", HE WILL ARGUE, HAS THROWN ISRAELIS OFF BALANCE AND MUST BE ACTIVELY PURSUED BY EVERY POSSIBLE MEANS IN CAREFULLY COORDINATED MANNER. PUBLIC SYRIAN APPROVAL OF SADAT'S REMARKS TO AMERICAN CODELS LAST MONTH SUGGESTS THAT SYRIANS AGREE ON BROAD LINES OF EGYPTIAN APPROACH, I.E., PEACE AGREEMENT WHICH WOULD END BELLIGERENCY, WEST BANK/GAZA PALESTINIAN STATE AND WITHDRAWAL MORE OR LESS TO 1967 BORDERS. SADAT WILL WANT TO PROBE WHETHER ASAD WILL IN FACT FOLLOW HIS LEAD IN PURSUING PEACE
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 CAIRO 17443 171545Z

PROCESS ALONG THESE LINES. EGYPTIANS HAVE NOT FORGOTTEN EXPERIENCE OF LAST OFFICIAL VISIT OF ASAD (EXCLUDING CAIRO SUMMIT OF TWO MONTHS AGO) IN NOV 73. AFTER OBTAINING ASAD'S AGREEMENT TO NEXT STEPS IN PEACE PROCESS, SADAT WAS CHAGRINED WHEN BAATH PARTY PRESSURES FORCED ASAD TO RENEGE FOLLOWING HIS RETURN TO DAMASCUS. GOE WOULD LIKE TO AVOID A RECURRENCE OF THIS EXPERIENCE.

5. PUBLICLY AND PRIVATELY GOE WILL STRESS BILATERAL HARMONY AND MUTUALITY OF INTERESTS THAT EXIST BETWEEN THE TWO PRESIDENTS AND STATES. UNLIKE THREE MONTHS AGO, SADAT'S CURRENT LINE IS THAT EGYPT AND SYRIA NEVER DISAGREED ON BASIC OBJECTIVES, ONLY ON TACTICS. PERHAPS SO, BUT EGYPTIAN LEADERSHIP HAS NOT FORGOTTEN THE BITTERNESS OF ITS QUARREL WITH ASAD OVER SINAI II, THE LEBANON AND THE PALESTINIANS. RESIDUAL SUSPICION PERSISTS, CERTAINLY ON THE EGYPTIAN SIDE AND WE SUSPECT ALSO ON THE SYRIAN SIDE, ESPECIALLY ON THE MATTER OF THE PALESTINIANS. SADAT REMAINS WARY OF ANY EFFORT ON ASAD'S PART TO REMOVE ARAFAT AND TO INSTALL A PRO-SYRIAN PLO LEADERSHIP, THEREBY LESSENING EGYPTIAN INFLUENCE IN THE PLO. GOE HAS WATCHED CLOSELY SYRIAN ACTIVITIES WITH RESPECT TO THE CURRENT INTERNAL PLO JOCKEYING FOR LEADERSHIP AND BELIEVES ASAD MAY STILL BE USING OPPORTUNITIES TO PUSH THE CONCEPT OF A PRO-SYRIAN TRIUMVIRATE TO REPLACE ARAFAT. SADAT'S DILEMMA IS THAT HE SHARES SYRIAN DOUBTS ABOUT ARAFAT'S LEADERSHIP CAPABILITY AND IS NOT IN PRINCIPLE AVERSE TO ARAFAT'S REMOVAL. YET HE KNOWS THAT IF THIS WERE TO HAPPEN NOW, IT WOULD MOST LIKELY MEAN SYRIAN CONTROL OVER THE PLO. THE TWO PRESIDENTS MAY BE EXPECTED TO PROBE EACH OTHER'S INTENTIONS VIS-A-VIS THE PLO, AND SADAT WILL DOUBTLESS RENEW

HIS INSISTENCE THAT ASAD ESCHEW THE CONCEPT OF A PRO-SYRIAN
TRIUMVIRATE. SADAT STILL WANTS A PALESTINIAN "GOVT IN
EXILE" AND MAY BE EXPECTED TO URGE THIS ON HIS SYRIAN VISITOR.
EILTS

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: FOREIGN RELATIONS, HEAD OF GOVERNMENT VISITS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 17 DEC 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: ullricre
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976CAIRO17443
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760465-0272
From: CAIRO
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19761231/aaaababb.tel
Line Count: 172
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ullricre
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 14 APR 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <14 APR 2004 by CollinP0>; APPROVED <04 AUG 2004 by ullricre>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: EGYPTIAN/SYRIAN RELATIONS ON EVE OF ASAD VISIT SUMMARY: ASAD VISIT, WHICH EXPECTED TO TAKE PLACE DEC 18-23, BEING BILLED AS MAJOR EFFORT TO COORDINATE EGYPTIA
TAGS: PFOR, OVIP, EG, SY, (ASAD, HAFIZ), (SADAT, ANWAR)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006